

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
CINCPAC
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 1637

ISLAMABAD FOR ADMIRAL WEISNER AND POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, IN, PK
SUBJECT: INDO-PAK RELATIONS

REF: NEW DELHI 1280, ISLAMABAD 935

SUMMARY: SPECULATION HERE ABOUT POSSIBLE SIGNIFICANT ADVANCES
IN THE UPCOMING VAJPAYEE VISIT TO PAKISTAN HAS SLAKENED
SOMEWHAT, BUT CONTINUES. A PAK EMBASSY OFFICER HAS INSISTED
THAT THE GOP POSITION ON RECIPROCAL TRANSIT ARRANGEMENTS
REMAINS WHAT IT HAS BEEN: UNTIL THE KASHMIR ISSUE IS SETTLED
SUCH ARRANGEMENTS ARE UNACCEPTABLE. HE BELIEVES THE VISIT WILL
BE SUCCESSFUL IF IT IS VIEWED AS A PRIMARILY GOOD WILL VENTURE.
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SUCH A RESTRAINED, IF ENCOURAGING ASSESSMENT WOULD BE MORE
READILY ACCEPTED HERE WERE IT NOT FOR WHAT IS WIDELY BELIEVED TO
BE A CLOSE TIE-IN BETWEEN THE VAJPAYEE VISIT AND THOSE THE
SHAH WILL MAKE TO DELHI AND ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATELY BEFORE IT.
END SUMMARY.

1. ALTHOUGH THE INDIAN PRESS CONTINUES TO CARRY SPECULATIVE

PIECES ABOUT THE UPCOMING VISIT YF FOREIGN MINISTER VAJPAYEE TO PAKISTAN, THE FREQUENCY OF SUCH STORIES IS LESS AND THE POSSIBILITIES OF POSITIVE ACCOMPLISHMENT CITED IN THEM GENERALLY MORE MODEST THAN WAS THE CASE LAST WEEK. AS ADDRESSEES WILL RECALL (REFTELS), THE OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE VISIT WAS ACCOMPANIED HERE BY OBVIOUSLY INSPIRED REPORTS OF MAJOR POSSIBILITIES FOR AN ADVANCE IN ECONOMIC TIES, INCLUDING RECIPROCAL TRANSIT ARRANGEMENTS. THIS EVIDENT INDIAN SIGNALLING TO THE GOP, THE INDIAN PUBLIC, AND OTHER GOVERNMENTS AND OBSERVERS DREW A QUICK RESPONSE FROM THE PAKS, AND GOP INSPIRED STORIES DESIGNED TO DEFLATE EXPECTATIONS SUBSEQUENTLY APPEARED IN THE PRESS HERE UNDER ISLAMABAD DATELINES.

2. IN A LONG TALK WITH THE POL COUNSELOR JANUARY 30, PAKISTAN EMBASSY POLITICAL COUNSELOR MUJAHID HUSSAIN COMMENTED ACERBICLY ON THIS PHASE OF DIPLOMACY BY INSPIRED PRESS REPORT. ACCORDING TO HUSSAIN, THE GOP POSITION IN RECIPROCAL TRANSIT ARRANGEMENTS REMAINS WHAT IT HAS BEEN: UNTIL THE KASHMIRE ISSUE IS SETTLED SUCH ARRANGEMENTS ARE UNACCEPTABLE. ASKED IF THIS POSITION HAD BEEN CONVEYED TO THE GOI, HUSSAIN INDICATED THAT THE INDIANS SHOULD HAVE SURMISED THIS FROM THE STORIES WHICH APPEARED LAST WEEK IN THE PAK PRESS. HE RULED OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF ANY SIGNIFICANT ADVANCE IN ECONOMIC TIES
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--THE ONLY PROBELM, AS HE PUT IT, IS THAT THE INDIANS DON'T BUY ENOUGH FROM PAKISTAN TO BALANCE PAK PURCHASES HERE -- AS WELL AS ANY PROGRESS ON THE KASHMIR YSSUE. HE SAID THAT HE EXPECTED THAT BOTH SIDES WOULD STATE THEIR CUSTOMARY POSITION ON KASHMIR AND LET IT GO AT THAT. NO PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT COULD DO LESS, ESPECIALLY NOT ONE WHICH PROFESSES TO BE AN INTERIM ONE AND HAS NO POPULAR MANDATE.

3. (ON THE INDIAN SIDE, VAJPAYEE REPORTEDLY STATED IN RESPONSE TO A RADIO INTERVIEWR'S QUESTION THAT IF THE PAKISTANIS RAISED THE QUESTION OF KASHMIR DURING HIS VISIT, HE WOULD REITERATD INDIA'S POSITION IN "VERY CLEAR AND UNEQUIVOCAL TERMS," TO WIT, KASHMIR IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF INDIA AND THEREFORE NOT A SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION. HE WAS ALSO QUOTED AS SAYIMG THAT ALTHOUGH PAKISTAN ILLEGALLY OCCUPIES ONE THIRD OF KASHMIR, INDIA WOULD NOT GO TO WAR TO REGAIN THE LOST TERRIOTRY. A FEW DAYS LATER HE TOLD A HYDERABAD AUDIENCE THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO "KEEP MUM ON THE QUESTION" WHEN ASKED WHETHER KASHMIR WOULD COME UP IN HIS TALKS WITH GOVERNMENT LEADERS IN PAKISTAN". MEANWHILE, DEFENSE MINISTER JAGJIVAN RAM REPORTEDLY REFERRED TO THE

KASHMIR QUESTION AS "ALREADY SETTLED" WHEN ADDRESSING A
PUBLIC MEETING.)

4. WHAT'S LEFT? HUSSAIN STATED THAT VAJPAYEE'S VISIT
WAS ESSENTIALLY A GOOD WILL VISIT, NOT ONE DESIGNED TO
MAKE PROGRESS ON SPECIFIC PROBLEM AREAS. HE SAID THAT HE
EXPECTED THAT WITHIN THESE LIMITS THE TRIP WOULD BE
SUCCESSFUL, PARTICULARLY BECAUSE BOTH GOVERNMENTS WANTED IT
TO BE SEEN AS SUCH. HE EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THE TWO
SIDES WOULD NOT SEEK TO SCORE PUBLIC DEBATING POINTS AT
ONE ANOTHER'S EXPENSE IN THE MANNER OF THE SWARAN SINGH/BHUTTO
1966 ROUND, THE LAST INDO-PAK FOREIGN MINISTER LEVEL TALKS
HELD IN THE SUBCONTINENT. HE SAW THE VISIT AS ANOTHER IN THE
ROUND OF TOURS GOI LEADERS HAVE UNDERTAKEN TO NEIGHBORING
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COUNTRIES SINCE JANATA TOOK OFFICE TEN MONTHS AGO, AND
DENIED THAT IT WAS PART OF A PACKAGE PLAN INCLUDING A
RETURN TRIP TO INDIA BY GENERAL ZIA U1-HAQ. ACCORDING
TO HUSSAIN, WHETHER THAT TRIP TAKES PLACE WILL DEPEND
IN PART ON THE OUTCOME OF THE VAJPAYEE VISIT. HE AGREED
WITH THE POL COUNSELOR'S SUGGESTION THAT VAJPAYEE HAD A
PERSONAL AND POLITICAL STAKE IN THE SUCCESS OF THE TALKS IN
THAT A SUCCESSFUL VISIT TO PAKISTAN WOULD FURTHER STRENGTHEN
THE IMAGE OF MODERATION ON HIS PART AND THAT OF HIS
ERSTWHILE JANA SANGH COLLEAGUES IN JANATA.

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AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBAXSY KATHMANDU
CINCPAC
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
S/AMCONSUL MADRAS 7390

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NEW DELHI 1637

5. SUCH A RESTRAINED AND REASONABLE ASSESSMENT OF THE
LIKELY OUTCOME OF THE VAJPAYEE VISIT WOULD BE MORE READILY
ACCEPTED HERE WERE IT NOT FOR WHAT IS WIDELY BELIEVED
TO BE A CLOSE TIE-IN BETWEEN THE VISIT AND THE SHAH'S
JOURNEYS TO INDIA AND PASKISTATN AND WHICH WILL COME
JOURNEYS TO INDIA AND PAKISTAN AND WHICH WILL COME
IMMEDIATELY BEFORE IT. IN A REGION WHICH THRIVES ON
CONSPIRACY THEORIES OF POLITICS AND HISTORY, THE PROXIMITY
OF THESE TWO VISITS CANNOT BE ACCEPTED AS COINCIDENCE OR THE
RESULT OF SCHEDULING CONVENIENCE. THE WELL-PUBLICIZED ACCOUNTS
OF THE EXTENSIVE CONSULTATION EFFORTS IN PREPARATION FOR THE
SHAH'S VISIT, WHICH HAVE INCLUDED TWO TRIPS TO TEHRAN BY
PM DESAI'S KEY ADVISER V. SHANKAR, HAVE HEIGHTENED THE
BELIEF THAT SOMETHING ORE THAN INDO-IRANIAN BILATERAL
RELATIONS WERE INVOLVED. SO HAS VAJPAYEE'S JANUARY 29
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SPEECH IN HYDERABAD IN WHICH THE FOREIGN MINISTER REPORTEDLY
ANTICIPATED AND EARNESTLY HOPED FOR "AN ENLARGED CONCEPT OF
MUTUAL INTER-DEPENDENCE AMONG COUNTRIES EXTENDING FROM IRAN
TO THE INDO-CHINESE PENINSULA WHICH WOULD PERMIT UNINTERRUPTED
INTERCHANGE OF COMMERCE, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL COOPERATION
AND IDEAS." THIS CONCEPT SEEMED SUSPCIOUSLY SIMILAR TO
THE SHAH'S COMMON MARKET PROPOSAL TO SOME INDIAN OBSERVERS.
THE STATESMAN, REVRTING THIS MORNING TO THE "EXPECTATION"
THAT OVERLAND TRADE ROUTES WOULD FIGURE PROMINENTLY IN
THE SHAH'S TALKS HERE AND VAJPAYEE'S TO ISLAMABAD, QUOTED
"AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES" AS STATING THAT
"INDIA FULLY SHARES THE SHAH'S DREAM OF...(REGIONAL)
COOPERATION AND IS PREPARED TO WORK WITH HIM AND FOR ITS
ACHIEVEMENT," A GOAL WHICH WOULD PRESUMABLY INCLUDE REGIONAL
TRANSIT AS ITS FIRST STAGE. FOREIGN SECRETARY MEHTA'S
REMARK TO THE CINCPAC YESTERDAY THAT INDIA COULD NOT TAKE
THE LEAD IN COMMON MARKET ARRANGEMENTS SINCE IT WOULD
BE ACCUSED OF MINI-IMPERIALISM (SEPTEL) DOES NOT
CONFLICT WITH THIS STATEMENT. THE IDEA THAT IT IS THE
SHAH WHO MAY BE ABLE TO BRING THE PAKS AROUND IS NOW
PROBABLY WIDELY SHARED HERE, DESPITE GOP EFFORTS TO
SUGGEST THAT THEY ARE NOT INTERESTED. IF THE VISIT TURNS
OUT TO GENERATE NOTHING BUT GOOD WILL, "A NEW LEAF IN

INDO-PAK RELATIONS" AS VAJPAYEE PUT IT THE OTHER DAY, THERE
COULD BE SOME DISAPPOINTMENT HERE, POSSIBLY IN THE GOI AS
WELL AS OUTSIDE.
GOHEEN

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